

In the Specification

Amend the specification as follows:

Amend the paragraph beginning at page 8 line 1 as follows:

In accordance with the present invention, instead of overlaying the measurement features from different layers on top of each other in the kerf area, they are displaced or separated by some amount, in a direction normal to the direction of ~~overlay~~ overlay error measurement, such that one can easily more obtain a measurement of what the ~~overlay~~ overlay misalignment is between them. The location in the kerf measurement structure is not normally important in practicing the present invention, and can be at random in various places, or it can be at one set reference location. A kerf measurement structure is separated from its corresponding similar active structure in the circuit area on each level, and the degree of separation in one of the x- or y-dimension is by the same distance. Further, each layer's kerf measurement structure should be displaced or separated in the dimension 90° or perpendicular to the direction of overlay error measurement so that the edges can be clearly identified for each layer, and the measurement structures of the two layers are not superimposed upon each other. The two kerf measurement features on the different layers need not be completely separated, but should be displaced by some amount so that features on each can be distinguished. For example, where the overlay error measurement is to be made in the y-dimension, the amount of the x-dimension separation is immaterial, as long as the kerf measurement features of the two layers which are difficult to discern in the active structure are physically displaced or separated in the kerf by a sufficient distance so that the separate layer features are easier to discern. However, in each layer the distance of separation or offset between the active feature in

the circuit pattern and the measurement feature in the kerf area, in the direction of the offset error measurement (e.g., the y-direction), has to be identical. This distance of separation in the direction of overlay error measurement may range from zero to any maximum that enables the active circuit structures and the corresponding kerf measurement structures to fit on the wafer.

Amend the paragraph beginning at page 11 line 9 as follows:

A third example of the present invention is shown in Figs. 9-12 wherein an active device 50 is comprised of active structure 52 and metal line 54. As before, Fig. 9 shows a proper alignment between the two, made on different lithographic levels, whereas in Fig. 10, there is a misalignment between active component 52 and line 54. Because the edge of line 54 is near to the edge of the active component 52 it is difficult to discern the edges of the two features made on different levels in the active area depicted in Fig. 10. As shown in Figs. 11 and 12, corresponding kerf measurement structure 50' comprises an active component 52' and metal line 54'. Kerf measurement 54' is displaced from kerf measurement structure 52' in a horizontal direction (perpendicular to the direction of overlay error measurement), as compared to the relationship of active structure 52 and metal line 54 in the active circuit feature 50. Figs. 11 and 12 illustrate that the two kerf measurement features 52', 54' need not be physically separated, as was the case in Figs. 3, 4 and 7, but need only be displaced by some amounts so that their respective edges are easily discerned. As shown in Fig. 12, the misalignment of the active structure 50 shown in Fig. 10 is easily determined by first measuring the edges of kerf measure structure 52'a and 52'b, and determining the centerline 52'c of structure 52', and comparing that centerline to the ~~that of~~ centerline of 54'c of metal line 54'. Again, the

overlay error is shown as the distance between the two arrows, and is in a direction perpendicular to the displacement of the two structures in the kerf measurement area compared to their relationship in the active circuit area.